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What's Wrong with Processed Foods

If you do an Internet search for processed foods, you'll get a whole lot of opinions on why they're a bad thing. There isn't a substantial amount of research behind the opinions when you look closely. In fact, there isn't a substantial amount of research on processed foods at all and why they're difficult to resist. Keep in mind that I'm talking about extensive processing; fruits and vegetables that are frozen immediately have been shown to have more nutrients than fresh produce that's been sitting in the grocery display case for a while, and canned fruits and vegetables are a close second.

What's the problem with processed foods, other than the [fat, sugar, and salt](#)? Two things stick out in my mind. First, the act of processing alters the vitamin, mineral, and phytonutrient content of the foods. Whether we're talking about grains such as wheat or corn, beans such as soy, or dairy such as milk, some if not most nutrients are lost in the processing.



Second, you lose the fiber, and given how little fiber adults get, that might be the most serious loss of a nutrient. Fiber acts as a prebiotic to feed the microbes in our gut and helps with satiety and digestion. Breads, pastas, rolls, bagels, and every other processed food that uses grains come up short.

I'll add one more to the list: probiotics. Processing destroys the good bacteria and other microbes that are valuable to our health. It isn't just what we are getting in processed foods that harmful; it's what we're not getting that compounds the problem.

What's the solution? I'll finish this up on Saturday.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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